

GREAT
PERFORMANCES



The Met
ropolitan
Opera



press information

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Presented on PBS by



ANGELA GHEORGHIU, ROBERTO ALAGNA
LEAD PUCCINI'S *LA RONDINE*
ON *GREAT PERFORMANCES AT THE MET*

A Rare Chance To Hear
Composer's Nod To Operetta

Opera's golden couple, Angela Gheorghiu and husband Roberto Alagna, offer viewers a rare chance to experience Giacomo Puccini's attempt to meld Italianate opera with the bittersweet Viennese operetta formula Saturday, April 25 at noon (ET) on *Great Performances at the Met* on PBS HD (check local listings). Last seen at the Met in 1936, *La Rondine* (*The Swallow*) is the tale of an unhappy kept woman who opts for one last fling with an idealistic young man, then returns – like the swallow – to her rich benefactor, sadder and more worldly wiser.

Great Performances at the Met is a production of THIRTEEN in association with WNET.ORG – one of America's most prolific and respected public media providers.

Soprano Gheorghiu and tenor Alagna ("singing with ravishing, tender voices and onstage intimacy," wrote *AP*) are the lovers Magda and Ruggero, with tenor Marius Brenciu as Magda's friend Prunier and veteran Met bass Samuel Ramey as her keeper, the banker Rambaldo. Marco Armiliato conducts.

The glittering new Art Deco production is by Nicolas Joël, with sets by Ezio Frigerio, costumes by Franca Squarciarapino and lighting by Duane Schuler. "A beguiling production,"

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raved *The New York Times*, “sophisticated, charming and poignant.”

Great Performances at the Met: La Rondine, the seventh of 11 productions airing this season, is sung in Italian with English surtitles; Giuseppe Adami wrote the libretto, after A.M. Willner and Heinz Reichert. The production was transmitted onstage as part of *The Met: Live in HD* January 10, 2009, and recorded for this telecast. Brian Large directs, with series favorite Renée Fleming as host. Jay Saks is audio producer.

The world’s most popular (and arguably slowest) opera composer, Giacomo Puccini oversaw ***La Rondine***’s premiere in Monte Carlo in 1917. It followed *La Fanciulla del West* (*Girl of the Golden West*) by seven years and preceded *Il Trittico* by one.

Great Performances is funded by the Irene Diamond Fund, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, public television viewers, and PBS. Corporate support for ***Great Performances at the Met*** is provided by Toll Brothers. Special funding for this telecast is provided by the Sybil B. Harrington Endowment Fund.

Visit **Great Performances Online** at pbs.org/gperf for additional information on this and other ***Great Performances*** programs.

For the Met, Mia Bongiovanni and Elena Park are Supervising Producers, and Louisa Briccetti and Victoria Warivonchik are Producers. Peter Gelb is Executive Producer. For ***Great Performances***, Bill O’Donnell is Series Producer; David Horn is Executive Producer.

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About WNET.ORG

New York public media company WNET.ORG is a pioneering provider of television and web content. The parent of Thirteen, WLIW21 and Creative News Group, WNET.ORG brings such acclaimed broadcast series and websites as [Great Performances](#), [Worldfocus](#), [Nature](#), [American Masters](#), [Charlie Rose](#), [Wide Angle](#), [Secrets of the Dead](#), [Religion & Ethics Newsweekly](#), [Visions](#), [Consuelo Mack WealthTrack](#), [Wild Chronicles](#), [Miffy and Friends](#), and [Cyberchase](#) to national and international audiences. Through its wide range of channels and platforms, WNET.ORG serves the entire New York City metro area with unique local productions, broadcasts and innovative educational and cultural projects. In all that it does,

WNET.ORG pursues a single, overarching goal – to create media experiences of lasting significance for New York, America and the world. For more information, visit www.wnet.org.

About the Met

Under the leadership of General Manager Peter Gelb and Music Director James Levine, the Met has a series of bold initiatives underway that are designed to broaden its audience and revitalize the company's repertory. The Met has made a commitment to presenting modern masterpieces alongside the classic repertory, with highly theatrical productions featuring the greatest opera stars in the world. Six new productions debut at the Met in 2008-09, including the company premiere of John Adams's *Doctor Atomic*.

Building on its 77-year-old international radio broadcast history – heard over the Toll Brothers-Metropolitan Opera International Radio Network – the Met now uses advanced media distribution platforms and state-of-the-art technology to attract new audiences and reach millions of opera fans around the world. *The Met: Live in HD*, the company's Emmy-winning series of live performance transmissions, shown in high definition (HD) in movie theaters around the world, expands from eight to eleven transmissions in 2008-09 and includes distribution in New York City public schools and a number of pilot programs in schools around the country. Global distribution of the series this season reaches over 850 participating venues in North and South America, Europe, Asia, and Australia. These performances subsequently air on PBS, and a selection of these HD performances are available on DVD. Metropolitan Opera Radio on SIRIUS channel 78 and XM channel 79 is a subscription-based audio service broadcasting both live and rare historical performances. The Met recently introduced *Met Player*, a new subscription service that makes its extensive video and audio catalog of full-length performances available to the public for the first time online, and in exceptional, state-of-the-art quality. In addition to providing audio recordings through the *Met on Rhapsody* on-demand service, the company also presents free live audio streaming of performances on its website once every week during the opera season with support from RealNetworks®.

The Met has recently launched several audience development initiatives, including Open House dress rehearsals, the Arnold and Marie Schwartz Gallery Met, reduced ticket prices—including an immensely popular new rush ticket program, and an annual Holiday Series presentation for families. For more information, please visit: www.metopera.org.

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